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The checklist and date distribution methods are used to evaluate the reference collections of two New Jersey Area Reference Libraries, an older, traditional single unit public library and a newer unit in a system of nine libraries. Three sectors of the reference collection are tested: reference books, abstracting and indexing services and serials. The date distribution method has merit as an evaluation device, while the checklist method presents several problems which prevent its being recommended immediately as a testing device. It was found that the newer library fares far better than the older one in the date distribution test and as well and generally better in the checklist test, which leads to a question about the choice of libraries best suited for a role of a Level II or Area Reference Library. General recommendations are made for clearer definitions of the elements within the New Jersey library plan, for date distribution studies to be made of present and potential Area Libraries, and for systematic research and experimentation to continue. Specific recommendations provide a second step towards evaluation of the Level II reference collections, and recommendations are also made for the production of a Core List of reference materials common to the Level II libraries, a Union List of Unique Titles, and a Recommended List of Reference Titles tailored to the needs of New Jersey. (Author/JB)

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NEW JERSEY AREA LIBRARIES:

A PILOT PROJECT TOWARD THE EVALUATION OF THE REFERENCE COLLECTION

Prepared for the Library Development Committee

of the New Jersey Library Association

by

Lloyd J. Houser

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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New Brunswick, New Jersey

July, 1968

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Abstract

New Jersey Area Libraries: A Pilot Project Toward the Evaluation of the Reference Collection. Prepared for the Library Development Committee of the New Jersey Library Association by Lloyd J. Houser. July, 1968.

The "Checklist" method and "date distribution" method are used to evaluate the reference collections of two Area Libraries. One library is an older, traditional single unit public library; the other a newer unit in an organized system of nine libraries. Three sectors of the reference collection are tested: reference books, abstracting and indexing services and serials.

The date distribution method has considerable merit as an evaluation device, while the checklist method presents several problems--subjectivity of selection of titles, lack of a standard list for comparison, acceptance of "equivalent" or substitute titles for a given title, lack of a clearly defined role of the reference function of an Area Library--which prevents its being recommended immediately as a viable testing device.

The newer library fares far better than the older one in the date distribution test, and as well and generally better in the checklist test. This success is attributed in part to the fact that it has had less obstacles to overcome in attempting to realize its objectives as an area library because of its newness and because its own systems concept of operations co-incides with the systems concept advocated in the New Jersey plan. The question is raised about the choice of which Level I libraries are best suited for a role of a Level II library.

General recommendations are made for clearer definitions of the elements within the New Jersey plan, for date distribution studies to be

made of present and potential area libraries and for systematic research and experimentation to continue.

Specific recommendations provide a second step towards evaluation of the Level II reference collections. The basis for the recommendations are that little significant evaluation can be accomplished 1)until the problem of the degree of similarity or dissimilarity of reference materials in Level II libraries is resolved or stated more clearly than at present and 2) until what exists throughout the system is known.

Current responsibilities and suggestions for cooperative or union lists of materials is criticized. Alternate recommendations are made for determining what reference materials are common to the Level II part of the system (Core Lists) and what materials are unique to one or more but not all parts of it (Union Lists of Unique Titles). In addition a Recommended List of Reference Titles for New Jersey Area Libraries is thought desirable.

These lists are considered to be experimental and to form the basis of future evaluation rather than be a final solution. Apart from their testing value, they have the advantage of being prepared at low cost; and considerable emphasis is placed on the value they would have in the communication process among Level II libraries and between Level I and Level II libraries which at present does not appear to be particularly strong.

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This project was carried out on the suggestion of Mary V. Gaver, co-chariman of the Library Development Committee of the New Jersey Library Association. The proposal was submitted on April 2, 1968, was approved by the Committee in May, and the work was carried out in June, 1968.

Working with the Rutgers University Graduate School of Library Service as a base of operations, I have had considerable assistance, suggestions, and cooperation from several people. Mrs. Shirley Bolles, Head of Community Services Department, Rutgers University Library and her staff gave valuable information and insight into the problem. Through Mrs. Bolles we were invited to the June Workshop for Area Reference Librarians where we met with many varied and interesting points of view about Level II libraries. Mr. Kevin Hegerty, Head of the Main Library of the Woodbridge Library System, and Mr. Lynn Moore, Director of the Plainfield Public Library, and their respective reference department staffs were completely cooperative and sympathetic to the study. Mr. Benjamin Weintraub, Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Library Service, Rutgers University, offered pertinent and critical observations throughout the study.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Mrs. Betty Miller, Library Development Division of the Pennsylvania State Library, and to Mr. R. Edwin Berry, Library Development Division of the New York State Library, for supplying lists of reference materials prepared for district and regional libraries in their respective state systems.

Miss Gail Birdsong and Mr. Michael Probst, students in the Graduate

School of Library Service, were research assistants in the best sense of the term. Their collaboration in every phase of the project from planning to data gathering to the writing of the report has been highly commendable.

I am particularly grateful to Professor Ralph Blasingame for reading the final draft of this report.

L.H.

New Brunswick, N.J.
July, 1968

INTRODUCTION

Before any project is begun, definitions are required. In this study, there was considerable difficulty with the name of the agency under observation. In Knowledge for All, the Level II libraries are described as follows:

> In a sense the area libraries would represent a new form of library facility. They would be regional public libraries and regional school libraries and regional college libraries. While many would be built up from existing public libraries, they would welcome students as well as adults. Call them simply area libraries, for the use of all who want to know.[1]

However, in much of the literature produced by the State Library, and in general conversation among librarians, and, indeed, in the original proposal for this study, these Level II libraries are referred to as Area Reference Libraries.[2]

As in Knowledge for All, the law states:

> "Area library" shall mean any library with which the state contracts for specialized services to all residents of an area

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[1]Martin, Lowell A. and Mary V. Gaver, Libraries for the People of New Jersey or Knowledge for All (New Brunswick, N.J.: New Jersey Library Association, Library Development Committee, November, 1964), p. 28.

[2]Some examples are: "The old law made no mention of area reference libraries nor research centers, since such agencies were conceived after 1959. The present law provides grants as follows: 1. Area Reference Libraries to receive a base grant of $35,000." State Library Aid Act--Information, April, 1967, pp. 3-4. Published by the State Library of New Jersey.

In LSCA Programs--A Report, July 1, 1966-June 30, 1967, published by the State Library, Level II libraries are consistently referred to as Area Reference Libraries.

In LSCA Services. Responsibilities of Area Reference Libraries, dated July 1, 1967, from the State Library, Level II libraries are again misnamed.

specified in the contract.[3]

This issue of definition is not only essential to communication, but also to this investigation of ways to evaluate a reference collection for a Level II library. Is a Level II library a bigger and better public library with diverse functions, one of which would be the reference function, or an Area Reference Library, in which the single or most important function is reference work?

Apparently, because state financial aid to Level II libraries was limited in the beginning, it was decided to use initial funds for the reference function, and the term Area Reference Libraries arose. In accordance with the state plan and the law, Level II libraries are referred to here as Area Libraries, and the study made of reference materials is recognized as only one of the functions of such libraries.

A second problem of definition is in the use of the term "backstop!"

> Twenty-two area libraries, strategically located over the state, should be developed to backstop the many local units in schools and communities. These will be strong points to which both smaller libraries and individual readers from communities and schools can turn when local facilities do not suffice.[4]

The vagueness of this term caused concern, particularly in an attempt to decide how similar or dissimilar the reference collections of Area Libraries should be, considering the strengths and weaknesses of the "many local units" served. Indeed, should Area Libraries resemble each other at all? Adequate evaluation of either of the methods used

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[3]L. 1967, Chapter 28, R.S. Cum. Supp. 18:24A-2 et seq. Senate Bill 348.

[4]Knowledge for All, p. 47.

in this project depends upon the answer to this question. For example, should the particular needs of an area outweigh the general need of similar resources and services (thus providing an equal opportunity to information for all the citizens of the state)?

This leads to a third problem, one of definition of specialization at Level II. Again, in relation to this study, the evaluation of reference materials will present unique problems unless specialization is defined more clearly than at present. With the funding of the three Level III libraries, the problem of specialization of resources at Level II should be more amenable to solution than previously.

THE PROPOSAL

The original proposal for this project read as follows:

> In lieu of hard and fast knowledge of a measurement device to insure the best possible reference collection for an Area Reference Library [sic] , the proposal here is to explore ways and means to evaluate a reference collection for such a library. Both the checklist approach and the date distribution of reference sources should be tried and compared.

The work was to be considered exploratory and in the nature of a pilot project.

The "checklist" method of evaluation has considerable appeal to librarians. The only difficulty in this method is finding the single, standard, definitive list of resources on which all can agree.

The "date distribution of materials" method measures the age of resources simply by their latest copyright dates. Although it is more readily and objectively accomplished than the "checklist" method, it is open to objections and criticisms by many reference librarians.

In either case, two factors were of primary importance throughout this study and indeed the success or failure of the study rests on the recognition of these factors.

The first is the previous work on the state plan, beginning with the preliminary surveys; the plan itself, Knowledge for All; and the subsequent publications of the Library Development Committee, referred to hereafter as the Second Report.[5] Throughout this project, every

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[5] Library Development Committee, New Jersey Library Association A Second Report, New Brunswick, N.J., May, 1964.
This work consists of four parts:
No. 1: Standards for Library Service to New Jersey Readers
No. 2: Where We Stand: Libraries Meeting Standards
No. 3: Summary and Checklist on Reference Resources
No. 4: Principles for a Plan of Library Service for New Jersey.

effort has been made to work within the existing framework so that this study may serve comparative purposes as well as its singular and primary purpose.

The second factor is a set of questions which persisted throughout the project and have had a bearing on the work done, on the assumptions under which the study was produced, and finally in making certain of the recommendations. These are as follows:

1. Should each Area Library have a similar or comparable collection of reference materials?

2. Should each Area Library have a core of reference materials plus materials of a specialized nature which might be shared by other Area Libraries or indeed by Level I libraries?

3. How are the answers to Questions 1 and 2 communicated to Level I libraries and to other Level II libraries?

4. How is the collection of reference materials to be evaluated?

5. What disposition is to be made of weeded materials from the reference collections of Level II libraries?

6. How can an Area Library maintain a balance between its former Level I autonomy and its successful functioning as a part of a statewide system?

In short, the first factor says that a plan is in existence and that it is considered desirable. The second factor, the set of questions, suggests that implementation of the plan will require more than desire and good intentions.

TWO NEW JERSEY AREA LIBRARIES

Two Level II libraries were chosen for the pilot project. While a number of possibilities were considered, the Plainfield and Woodbridge libraries were chosen primarily because the Plainfield library is an older, established library with a long tradition of both reference and circulation functions, and at present consists of only one unit, the main library; while the Free Public Library of Woodbridge is a new library and is a part of a system, dividing in a sense the reference and circulation functions between the main library unit and the eight branches.

In a large, ill-defined sense, the entire collection of a library may be construed to be a "reference collection." For the purposes of this project, materials which are used to refer to a specific piece of information or books which are not ordinarily read through from cover to cover, have been construed to mean "reference materials." These include reference books, abstracting and indexing services, and serials. Fortunately for this study, both libraries maintain shelf-lists of all materials classified as reference and data has been taken from these shelf-lists.

Some data about the two libraries will give a picture of the comparative sizes of the two libraries and their reference collections.

Table 1.

Plainfield Public Library		Woodbridge Public Library
121,300	Total volumes 1965*	74,500
128,500	Total volumes 1966*	102,700
128,500	Total volumes in main unit 1966	29,000
3,589	Reference Books	1,984
1,269**	Reference Sets & Serials	309

*from New Jersey State Library. Public Library Statistics.
**includes 871 titles for which no date was indicated on the shelf-list cards. These "no-date" titles may be assumed to be quite old from shelf-list evidence. The large areas of these no-date titles are in the 300's (159 titles) and in the 900's (282 titles).

METHODOLOGY

Two means of evaluation were used.

I. The date distribution of reference books method--the tabulation from the shelf-lists of copyright dates using latest copyright dates rather than reprint or publishing dates. These dates were then graphed and compared against a date distribution of the list of reference materials recommended by the State Library of Pennsylvania for its district library centers[6] and the list of reference materials recommended by the New York State Library for its regional library centers.[7] The copyright dates were tabulated by broad Dewey Decimal Classification.

The subject breakdown used in the Second Report has been translated into Dewey Classification numbers. In the Second Report No. 3, the following statement was made:

> Within the subject areas, greatest inadequacy was noted in reference materials for natural science, fine arts, games and sports, religion, and in the provision of dictionaries and indexes, the last area a basic essential for starting reference work.[8]

In Dewey Classification, these subject areas become:

religion = 200's,
natural science = 500's
fine arts and costumes = 700-792 & 391, and
games and sports = 793-799.

For reasons noted later, the 300's (the social sciences) have also been analyzed separately in this study.

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[6]Pennsylvania State Library. Reference List for District Library Centers. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, April 15, 1967. (mimeographed)

[7]New York State Library. Basic List of Reference Books Recommended for Central Libraries. Albany, New York, January 3, 1964. (mimeographed)

[8]Second Report No. 3, p. 2.

The Pennsylvania list has a cut-off date of 1967 which makes it ideal for date distribution comparison purposes. The New York list has a cut-off date of 1963 which limits its value for date distribution purposes, although a date distribution graph for it has been prepared.

II. The checklist method--a title-by-title comparison with an accepted or authoritative list. This method presents the basic problem of subjectivity. The American Library Association has not considered preparing a list of reference books for a regional or areal library.[9] The list of reference books in the Second Report No. 3 is for small public libraries. The Winchell Guide to Reference Books is designed for a research collection. The New York list is inadequate since it has a 1963 cut-off date.

The checklist method of measuring a reference collection presents two basic questions: 1) against which list should a New Jersey Area Library reference collection be measured? and 2) should each library have a similar collection of reference materials? Another question is the one of equivalency: should a library own the title listed or will a similar title suffice?

The Pennsylvania list was used because it contained over a thousand titles and because it was supplemented through 1967 copyright dates. No claim is made by its author for its completeness or superiority over other lists of a similar nature.

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[9]Per phone conversation with Ruth White, Exec. Sec. Reference Services Division, A.L.A., June 7, 1968.

DATE DISTRIBUTION OF REFERENCE BOOKS: FINDINGS

Table 2.

Date Distribution	Pennsylvania List	Woodbridge P.L.	Plainfield P.L.
% of reference books dated 1950 or later	92.34%	91.63%	33.02%
% of reference books dated 1960-67	72.22%	72.63%	25.08%

In view of the low percentage of books of recent copyright date, a fuller analysis was made of Plainfield's holdings:

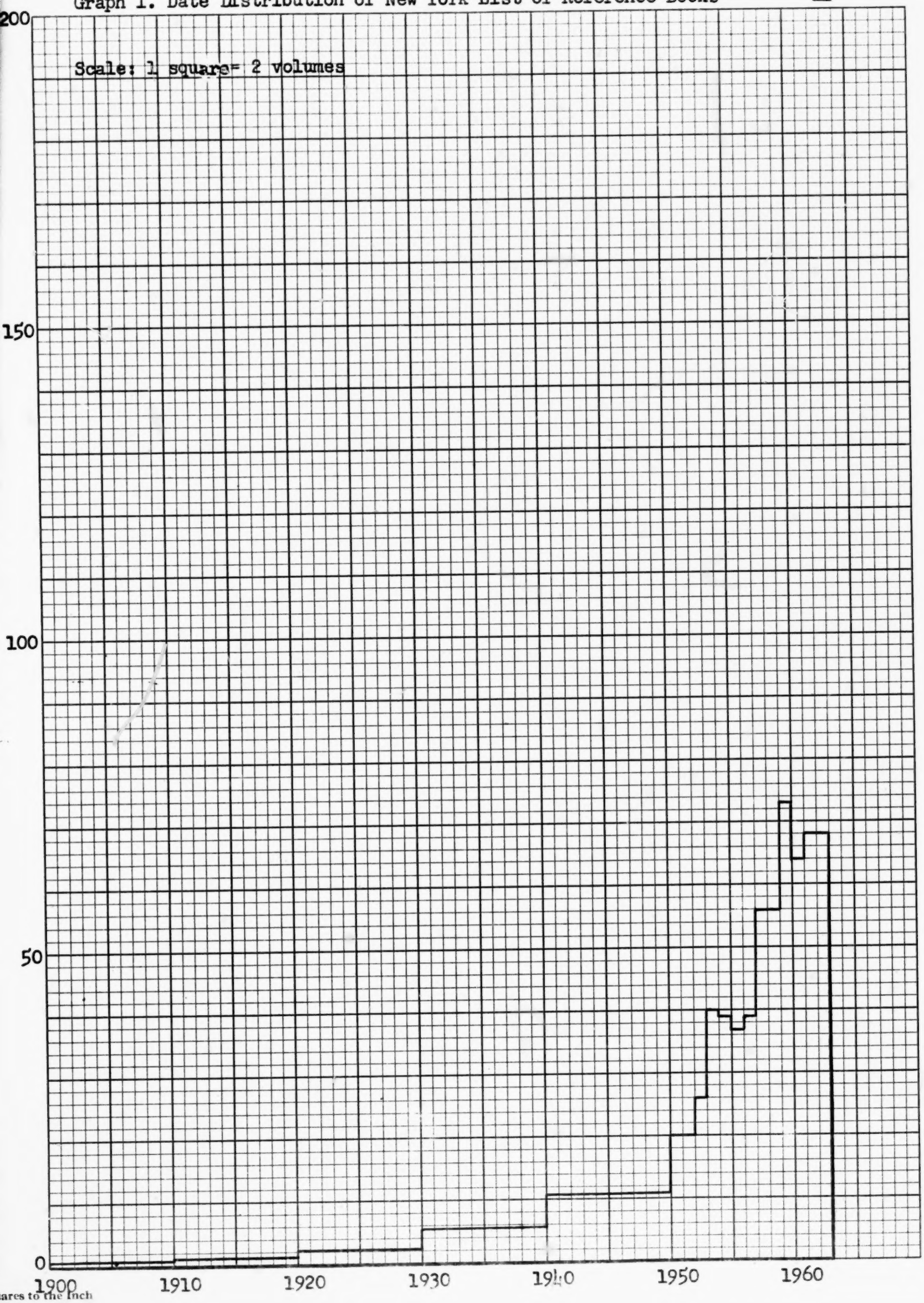
17th, 18th and 19th century reference books	21.90%
reference books dated 1900-49	45.08%
reference books dated 1950+	33.02%
	100.00%

On the following pages, graphs illustrate the date distribution of reference books of the New York list, the Pennsylvania list and the collections of the Woodbridge and Plainfield Public Libraries.

The total count for the 17th to 19th centuries has been averaged for plotting. The total count for the period 1900-49 was made by decades and has been averaged for plotting. For the years 1950-67, the graphs represent the actual count for each year.

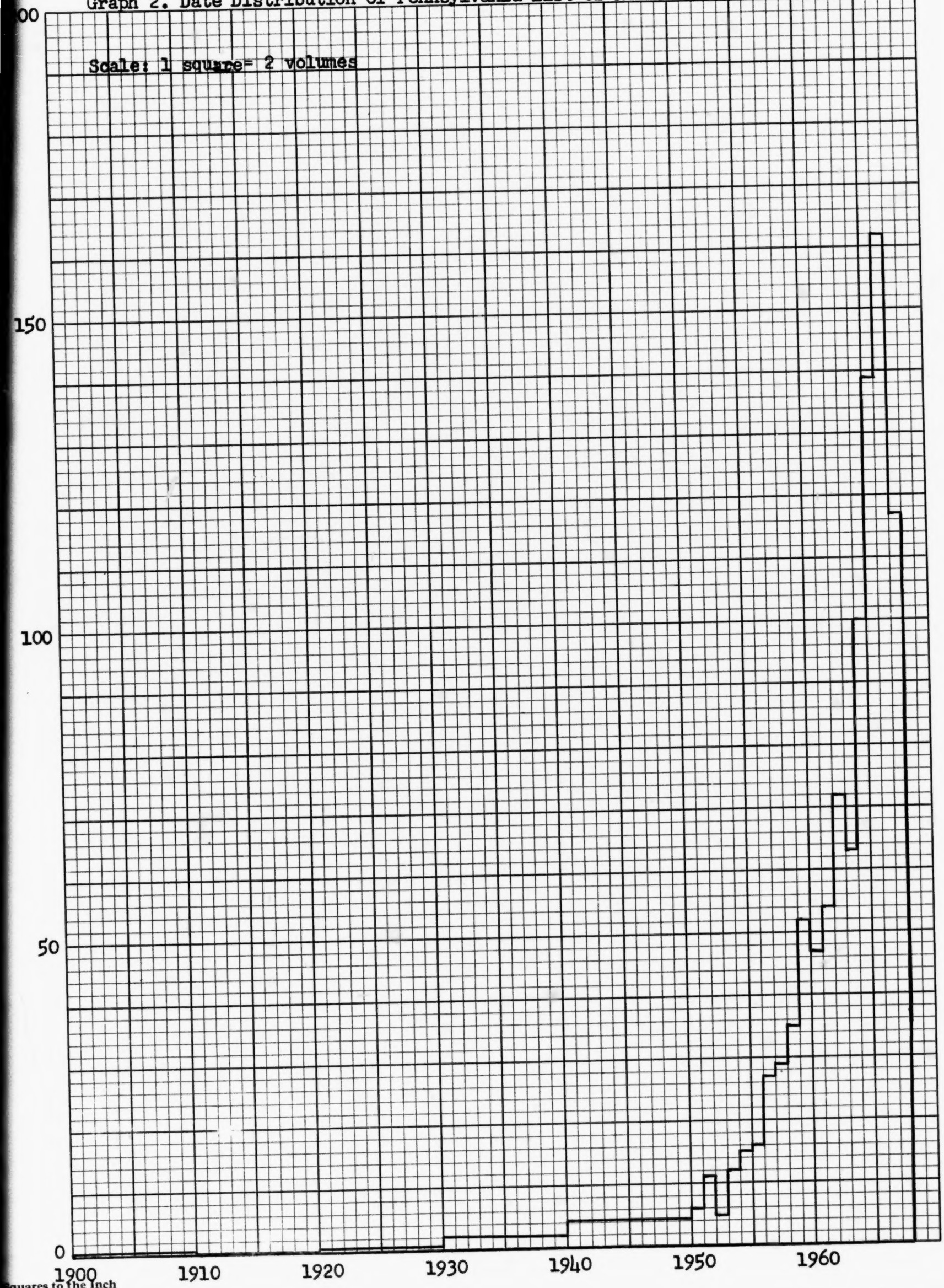
The most oustanding features are 1) the emphasis in the New York and Pennsylvania lists and the Woodbridge collection on current materials and 2) the close similarity between the Pennsylvania list and the Woodbridge collection.

Graph 1. Date Distribution of New York List of Reference Books

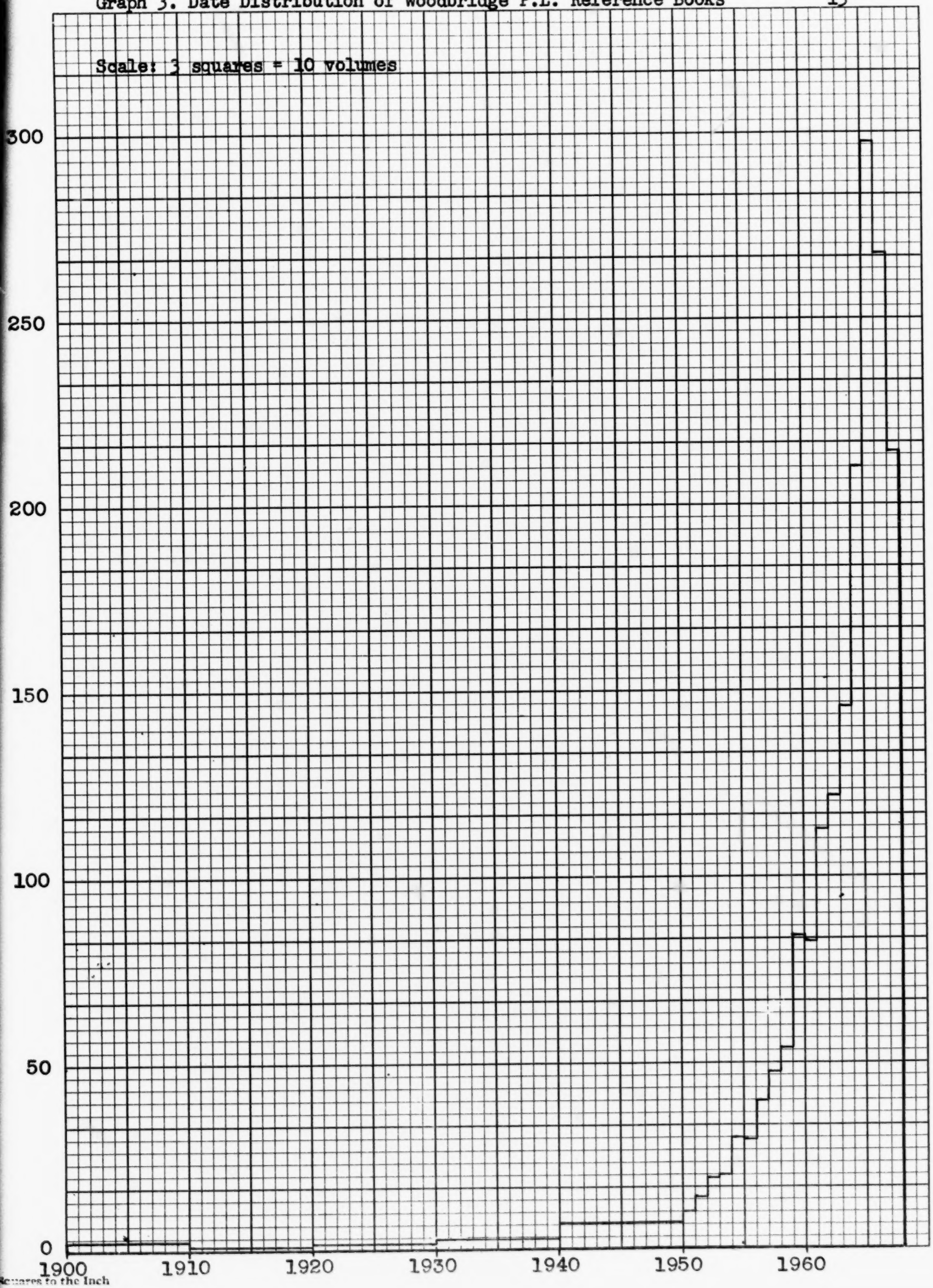


squares to the inch

Graph 2. Date Distribution of Pennsylvania List of Reference Books

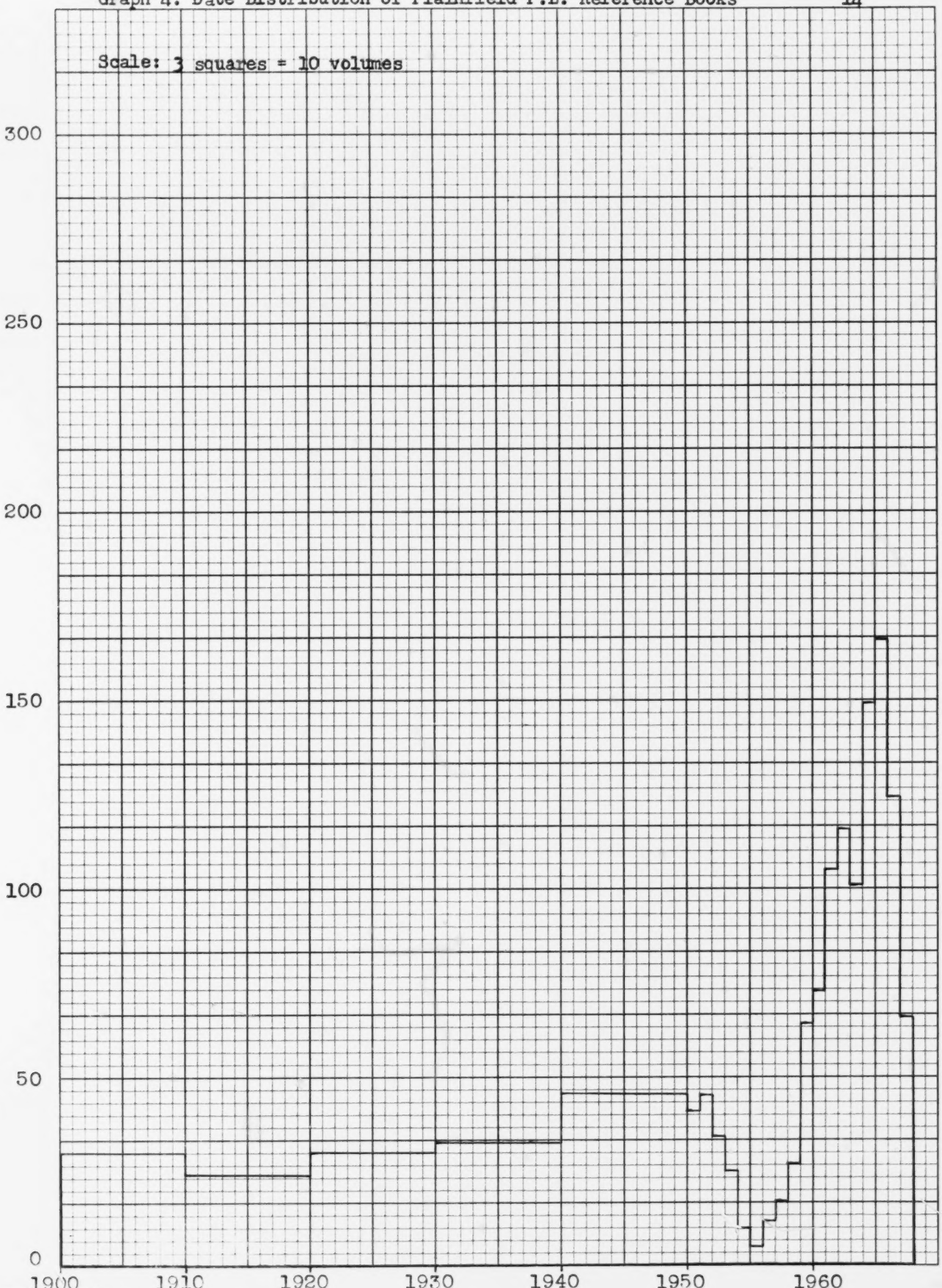


Graph 3. Date Distribution of Woodbridge P.L. Reference Books



Squares to the Inch

Graph 4. Date Distribution of Plainfield P.L. Reference Books



The use of the date distribution of materials method or the study of the obsolescence of collections is not new or unusual. Some noteworthy examples from the literature might be noted here.

One of the earliest is C. F. Gosnell's study of the obsolescence of books in college libraries reported in 1944.[10] Rolland Stevens observed the currency characteristics of scientific materials in 1953.[11] Fussler and Simon reported in 1961 on the dates of books used in large research libraries.[12] One of the more pertinent studies is Blasingame's use of the date distribution of materials requested for inter-library loan in various types of libraries in Pennsylvania.[13] In the Library Code of Pennsylvania, recommendations are made regarding the age of materials in local libraries in a relatively small town (or a branch of a large city system); Blasingame has suggested characteristics of the optimum date distribution of materials used in a district library center as well as those of large or research libraries. It should be noted that he is concerned with what materials are used; this forms the basis for what age of materials are needed for various levels of libraries within the Pennsylvania plan.

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[10]Gosnell, C. F. "Obsolescence of Books in College Libraries," College and Research Libraries, 5:115-25, May, 1944.

[11]Stevens, Rolland E. Characteristics of Subject Literatures. (ACRL Monograph No. 6) Chicago, ACRL, 1953.

[12]Fussler, Herman H. and Julian L. Simon. Patterns of Use of Books in Large Research Libraries. Chicago, University of Chicago Library, 1961. (Council of Library Resources Grant 64)

[13]Blasingame, Ralph Feasibility of Cooperation for Exchange of Resources among Academic and Special Libraries in Pennsylvania. (Pennsylvania State Library Monograph No. 5) University Park, Institute of Public Administration, Pennsylvania State University, 1967.

In another study of the date distribution of materials in a general collection of a district center library, Blasingame compared the dates of the children's books, adult fiction and adult non-fiction against the dates of a standard catalog.[14]

In the earlier study, the materials requested in small public libraries were almost entirely of recent vintage; in a district library center the graphed curve of the dates of requested materials was very high for most recent materials and tapered to a very low point for less recent materials but extended somewhat further back in time than the curve of the small library. In the research libraries, the curve was considerably flattened, less high than the middle level library for the most recent materials, though considerably higher for those materials than for older and very old materials.

Blasingame's "family of curves," which represent requests of materials at three levels of libraries which are roughly equivalent to the three levels in the New Jersey plan, share a common characteristic: newer materials are requested more often than older. While the curves of date distribution of materials vary in length, they are similar in direction.

These tests of use of materials should be kept in mind in building a reference collection and in evaluating it. As in other state plans, the objective of the New Jersey plan is to open avenues to the acquisition of knowledge by all of the citizens of the state. For many years

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[14]Blasingame, Ralph, et al. The Book Collections in the Public Libraries of the Pottsville Library District; a Date and Subject Distribution Study. Pottsville, Penn., Pottsville Free Public Library, 1967.

studies have shown that a large percentage of any given constituency of a public library does not use its library. What then are the needs of the non-users? Is currency of information one of the variables affecting the use or non-use of public libraries?

The literature reveals no example of testing a collection of reference books by date distribution. Reference librarians will be the first to challenge the basic assumption of such a test which is that "the latest is best." Any number of reference titles of definitive works having very old copyright dates will come to mind. However, it is the entire reference collection which is being tested here, not individual titles. Nor is any suggestion made that an Area Library should not have in its reference collection titles copyrighted in the 18th or 19th century. However, it has seemed advisable to study reference monographs as a separate unit of the reference collection. Reference books are published and often republished in new formats or in new editions which may supplement, complement or supersede earlier editions. These single volume works are thus different from works published over a period of time in sets or in serial fashion, which are treated in a later part of this study.

In addition to the date distribution of the overall reference collection, the dates of materials in the subject areas deemed most inadequate in the 1964 survey by the Library Development Committee were analyzed.

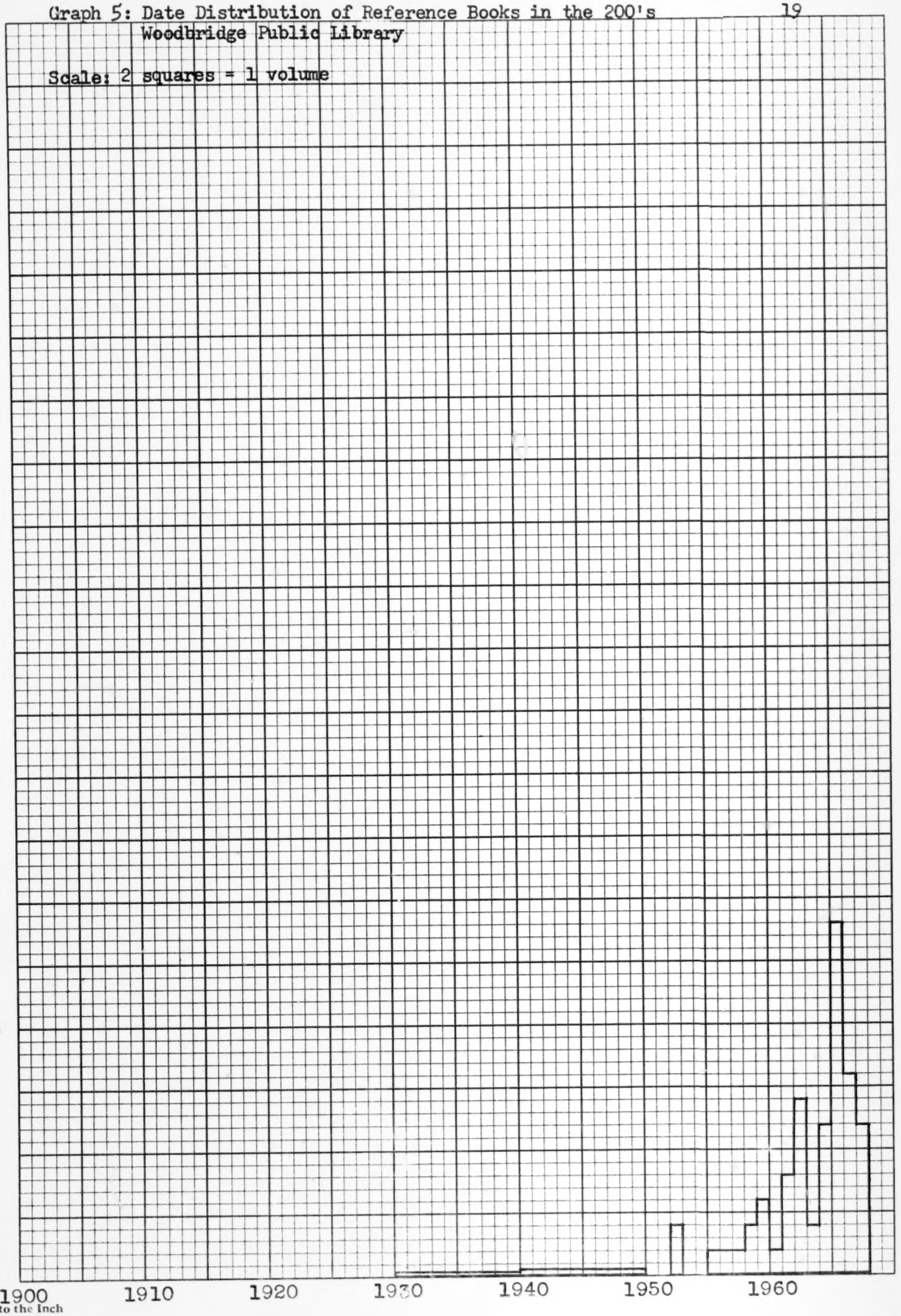
Table 3.

Subject	Library	Reference books dated: 1900-67	1950+	1900-49	to 1899
200= religion	Woodbridge	75.00%	90.63%		
	Plainfield	20.61%	29.09%	+ 39.39%	+ 31.52% = 100%
500= natural sciences	Woodbridge	69.53%	90.63%		
	Plainfield	30.17%	38.55%	+ 31.28%	+ 30.17% = 100%
700-792= fine arts & 391= costumes	Woodbridge	71.58%	93.68%		
	Plainfield	18.71%	25.15%	+ 57.67%	+ 17.18% = 100%
793-799= games & sports	Woodbridge	93.55%	96.77%		
	Plainfield	42.11%	65.79%	+ 26.32%	+ 7.89% = 100%

As in the overall distribution of materials, additional chronological divisionshave been included to show the entire Plainfield collection. The distributions of these subject divisions are presented graphically on the following pages.

Graph 5: Date Distribution of Reference Books in the 200's
Woodbridge Public Library

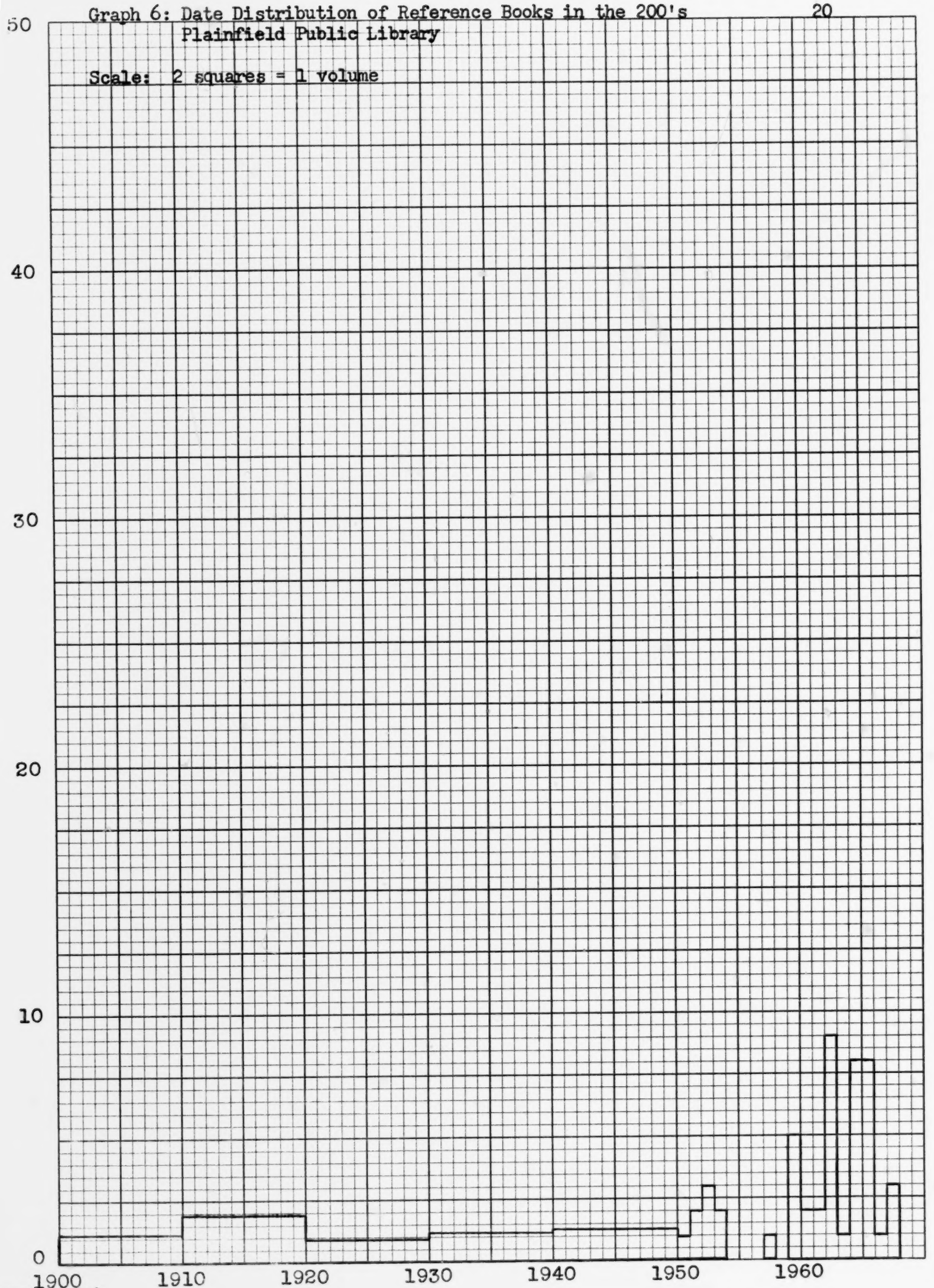
Scale: 2 squares = 1 volume



uares to the Inch

Graph 6: Date Distribution of Reference Books in the 200's
Plainfield Public Library

Scale: 2 squares = 1 volume

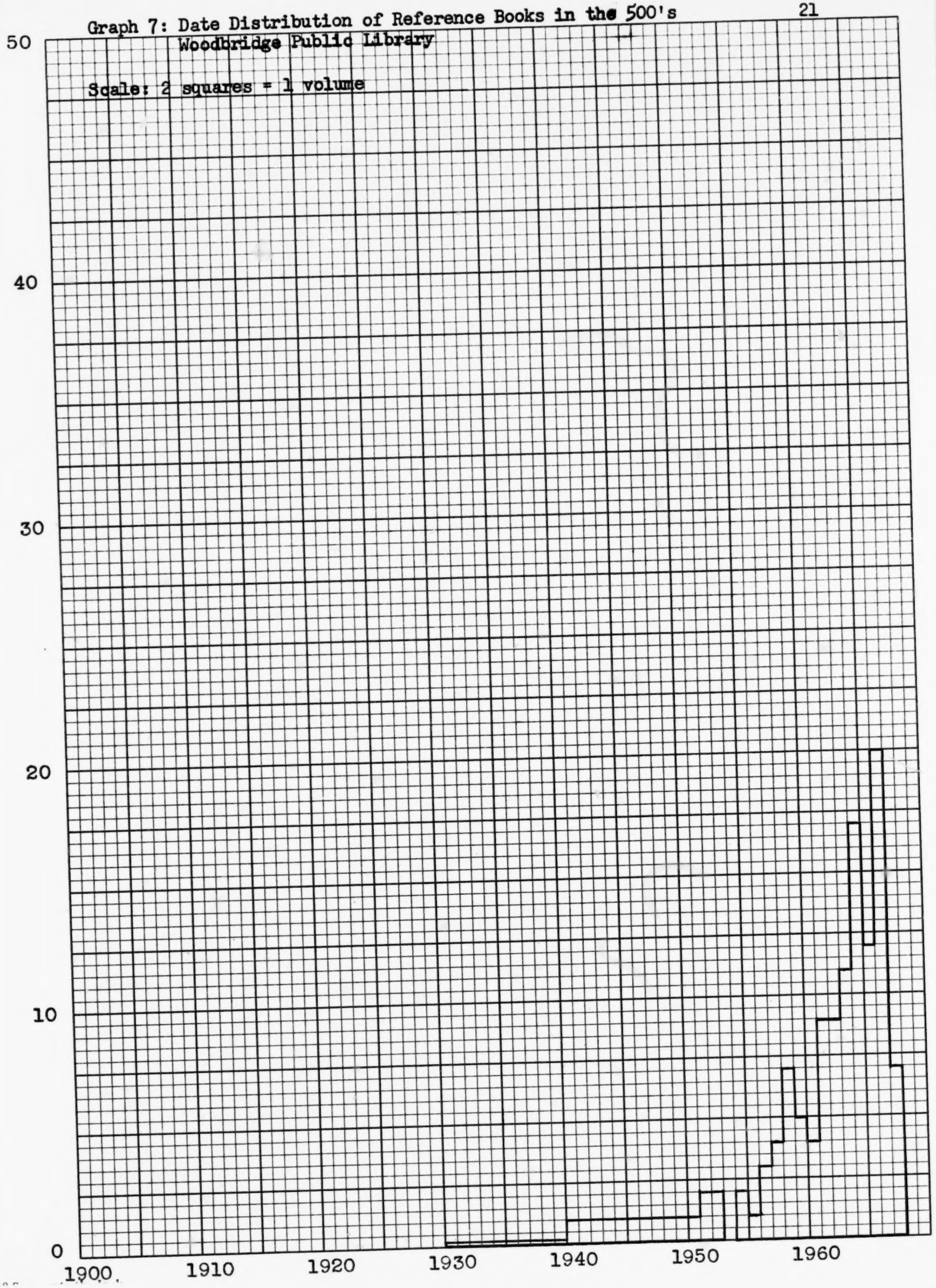


quares to the Inch

Graph 7: Date Distribution of Reference Books in the 500's

Woodbridge Public Library

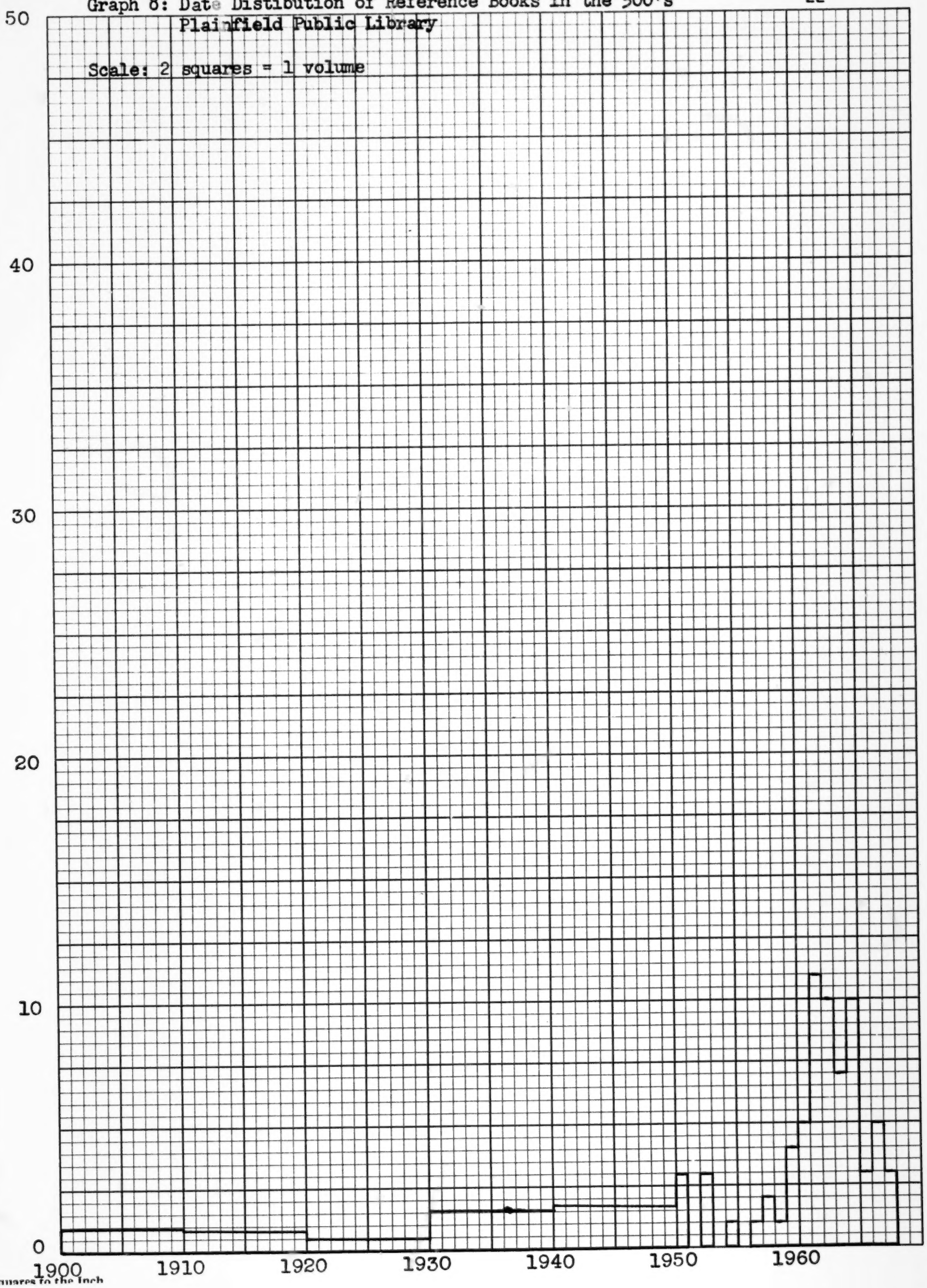
Scale: 2 squares = 1 volume



Graph 8: Date Distibution of Reference Books in the 500's

Plainfield Public Library

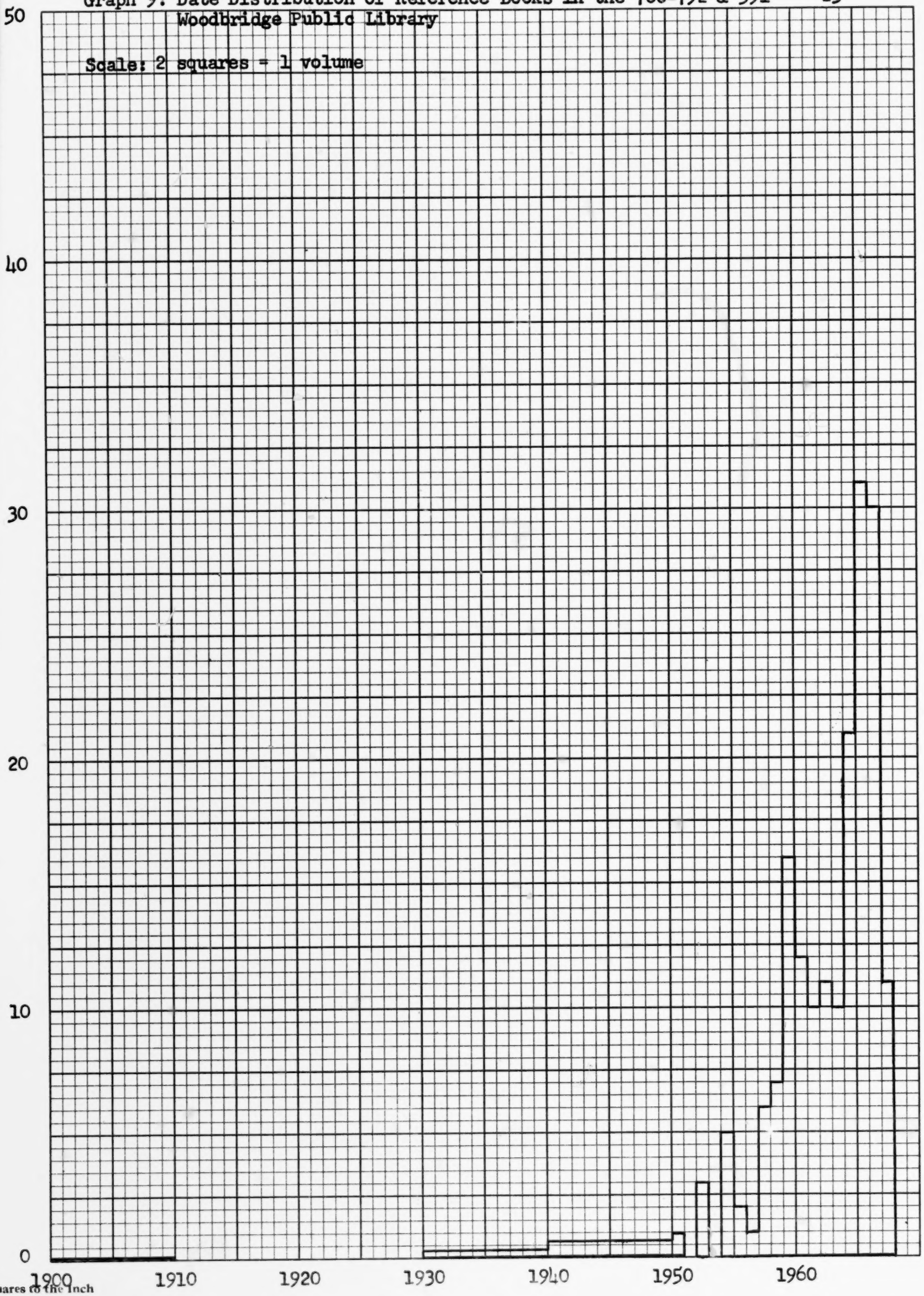
Scale: 2 squares = 1 volume



10 Squares to the Inch

Graph 9: Date Distribution of Reference Books in the 700-792 & 391
Woodbridge Public Library

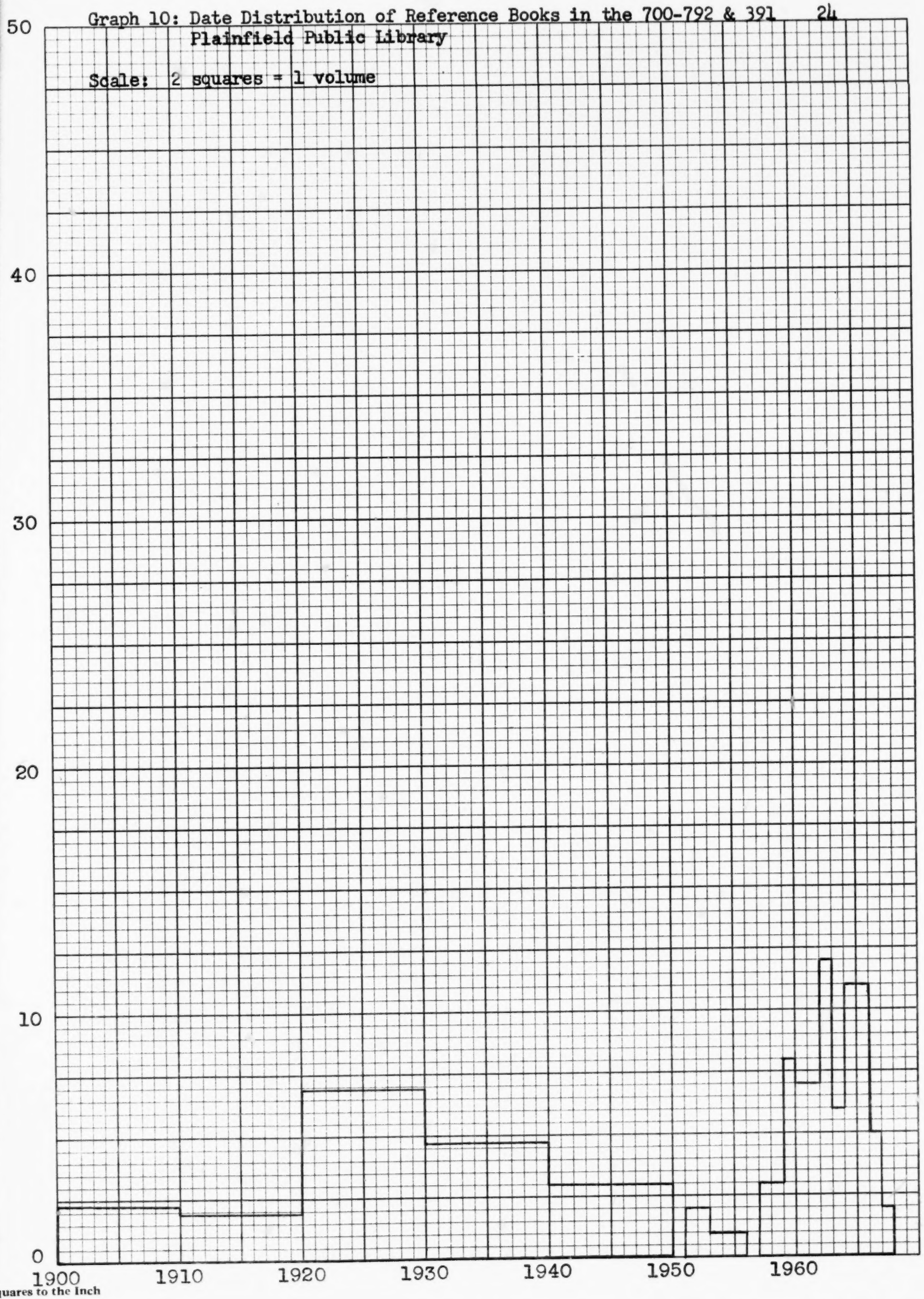
Scale: 2 squares = 1 volume



quares to the Inch

Graph 10: Date Distribution of Reference Books in the 700-792 & 391
Plainfield Public Library

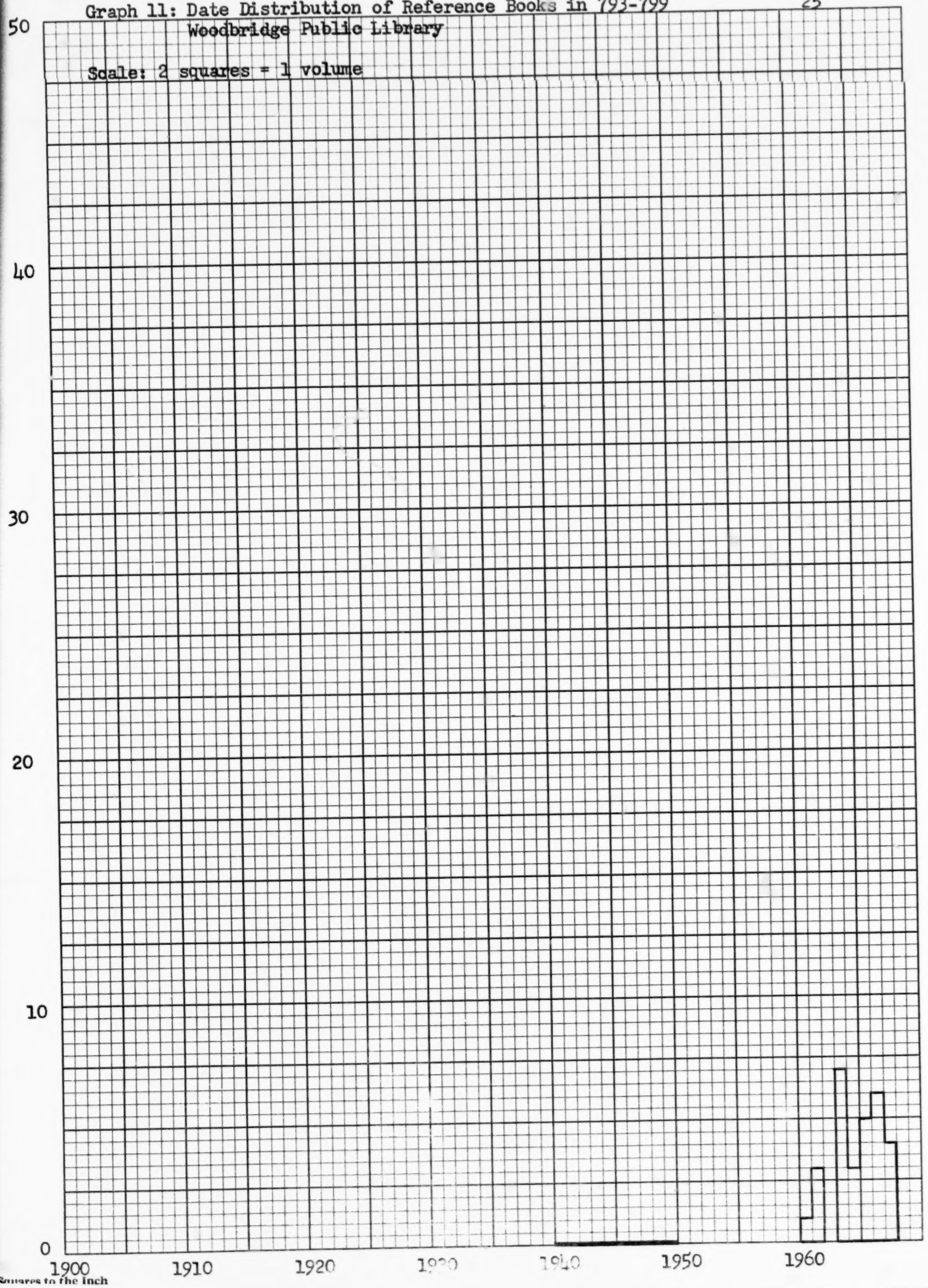
Scale: 2 squares = 1 volume



Squares to the Inch

Graph 11: Date Distribution of Reference Books in 793-799
Woodbridge Public Library

Scale: 2 squares = 1 volume

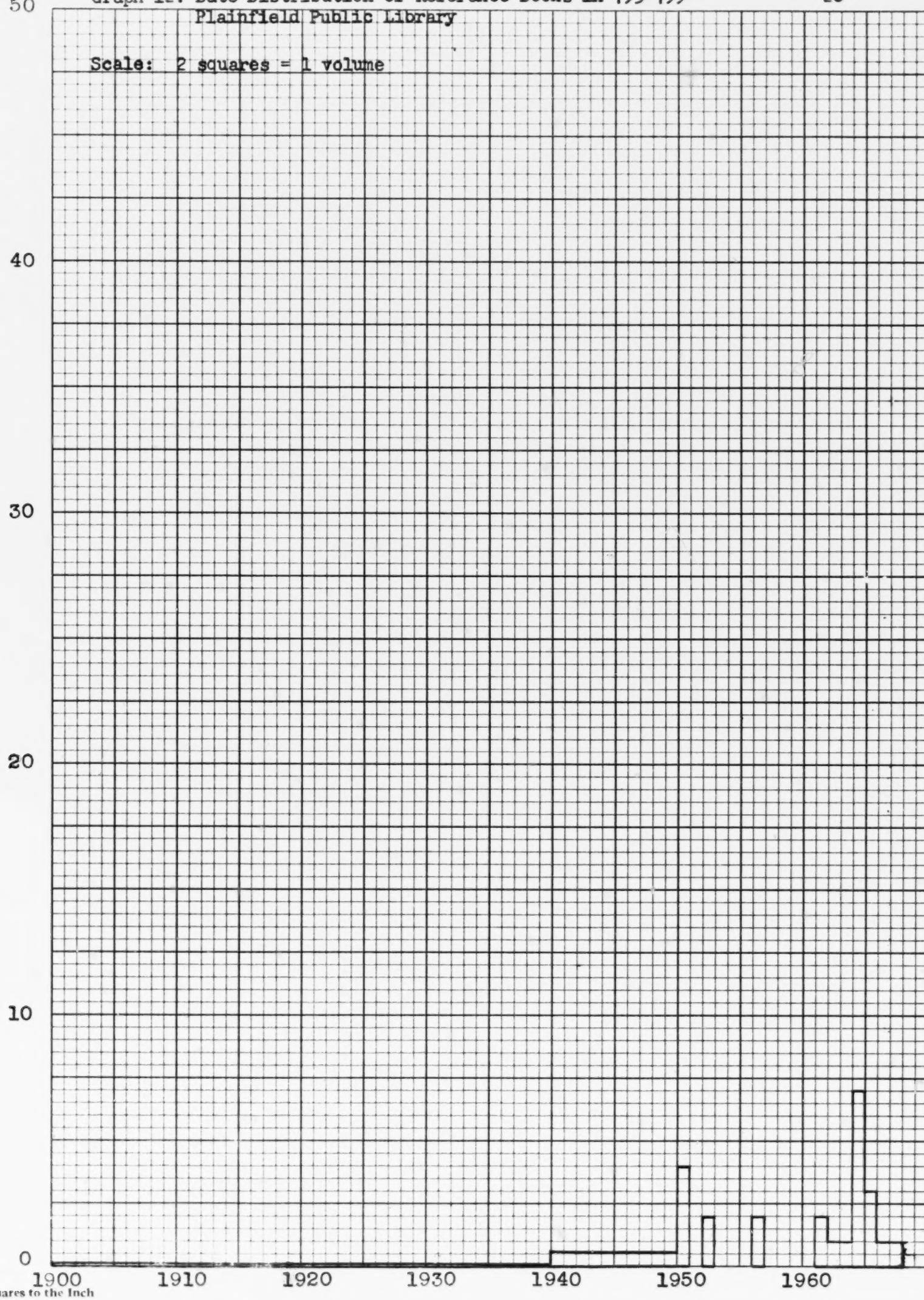


Squares to the Inch

Graph 12: Date Distribution of Reference Books in 793-799

Plainfield Public Library

Scale: 2 squares = 1 volume



10 Squares to the Inch

Because current events are presumed to be in the province of public library reference information, and because the social sciences in general are the center of considerable attention from the national level down; because in the Crowley Ph.D. dissertation at Rutgers,[15] the performance in this subject area by New Jersey librarians (including some area reference librarians) proved not very distinguished; because a workshop on information sources in the social sciences was held June 18, 1968, at Rutgers University Library for area reference librarians; the reference books in the 300 classification were also analyzed.

Table 4.

Subject	Library	Reference books dated: 1900-67	1950+	1900-49	to 1899
300= social sciences	Woodbridge	74.74%	96.30%		
	Plainfield	27.45%	35.58%	+ 47.09%	+ 17.33% = 100%

The graphs of these collections follow.

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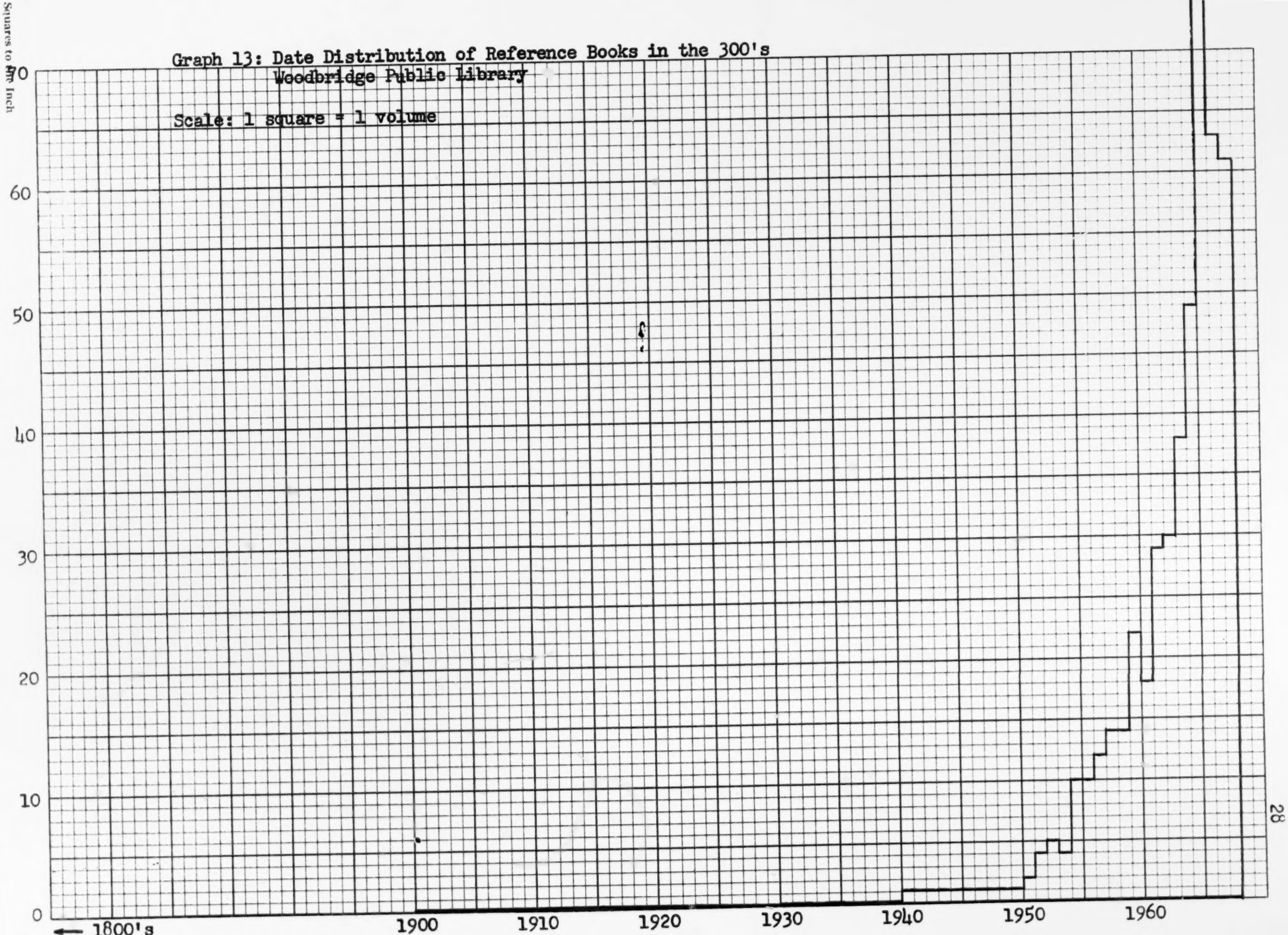
[15] Crowley, Terrence. The Effectiveness of Information Services in Medium Size Public Libraries. (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation) Graduate School of Library Service. Rutgers - The State University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, May, 1968.

Graph 13: Date Distribution of Reference Books in the 300's
Woodbridge Public Library

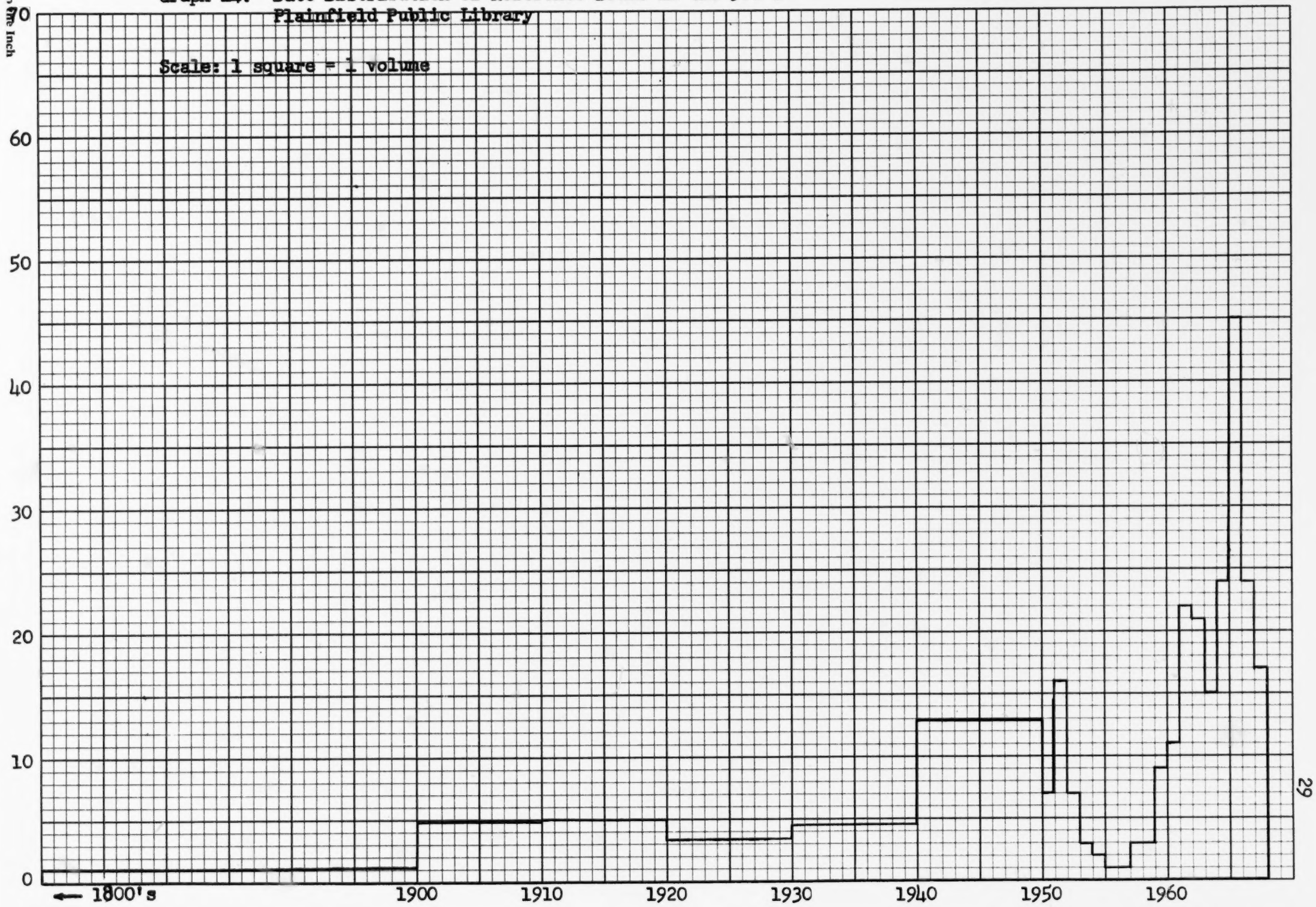
Scale: 1 square = 1 volume



Squares to the Inch

Graph 14: Date Distribution of Reference Books in the 300's
Plainfield Public Library

Scale: 1 square = 1 volume



It has been noted above that in the lists of reference books recommended by the state libraries of New York and Pennsylvania for the level two libraries in their systems, the emphasis is on current titles. The similarity of the date distribution of books on the Pennsylvania list and the Woodbridge collection, both of which included titles dated to 1967, was also noted. It is rewarding to note the similarity of percentages of recent titles throughout the subject breakdowns analyzed in this study of the Woodbridge collection. This suggests that Woodbridge library has, at least in terms of currency, a well rounded collection of reference books.

Table 5

	Reference Books dated 1950+:			
Pennsylvania List	The collection	92.34%		
Woodbridge P.L.	The collection	91.63%	cf. Plainfield P.L.	33.02%
Woodbridge P.L.	200's	90.63%	cf. Plainfield P.L.	29.09%
	300's	96.30%		35.58%
	500's	90.63%		38.55%
	700-792 & 391	93.68%		25.15%
	793-799	96.77%		65.79%
	Reference Books dated 1960-67:			
Pennsylvania List	The collection	72.22%		
Woodbridge P.L.	The collection	72.63%	cf. Plainfield P.L.	25.08%
Woodbridge P.L.	200's	75.00	cf. Plainfield P.L.	20.61%
	300's	74.74%		27.45%
	500's	69.53%		30.17%
	700-792 & 391	71.58%		18.71%
	793-799	93.55%		42.11%

At this point it is appropriate to list difficulties with and objections to the use of the date distribution method as a means of evaluating a reference collection.

1. The nature of publishing is such that a new copyright date does not necessarily mean that the information in the latest edition of a

title is quantitatively or qualitatively better than an earlier edition of the same title. Moreover, occasionally, in the instances of reprinting out-of-print titles, a new copyright date may appear for new preface material even though there is no change in the content of the original book.

2. A number of titles remain standard works or are classics; new editions with more recent copyright dates are not necessarily desirable. Many older titles remain valid even though new editions are produced and in some instances the older title will be superior to a newly produced work.

3. Some reference works with earlier copyright dates may very well serve as adequately as similar works with later copyright dates.

4. In a large collection of reference books, in certain areas at least, two or three recent titles may well update an older edition of a work of a different title and preclude the necessity of replacing it with its newer edition.

In spite of these objections, and in accordance with the emphasis in the New Jersey plan on the "modern" aspects of information needs in the state, it is difficult to give a favorable evaluation to the Plainfield collection of reference books. One of the serious problems with the Plainfield collection appears to be that 45.08% of its reference books is dated in the first half of the twentieth century. As indicated by the graph of its overall collection of reference books (Graph No. 4) there is a conspicuous decline in the number and percentage of reference books dated in the early and mid-fifties. This overall decline is repeated significantly in the subject breakdowns. If this were a history of a library, one could trace the causes for this decline. The concern

of this study is the overall quality of the reference collection.

In contrast, Woodbridge, as a system, has considerable advantages. It has a centralized reference collection to serve its nine branches and fulfill its areal responsibilities. The Woodbridge system has been designed to serve a township of 27 square miles in contrast to Plainfield which has 5.9 square miles. In addition it is a relatively new library system which made it an attractive model to study in this project. Building a new collection is surely an easier task than strengthening an old one. It should be noted that Woodbridge has not yet had to face the serious problem of weeding its collection.

However it has come about, the date distribution of the collection of reference books in the Woodbridge system is an admirable one. Not only is the overall collection of recent vintage but there appears to be every attempt to make the subject areas equal in terms of currency of information.

If the reference collections of these two Area Libraries are so dissimilar, this project should direct the Library Development Committee toward a hard look at other collections in other Area Libraries. What, for example, might one expect to find in a library which is a County Library and an Area Library? Is it possible that a relatively new library has better advantages in fitting itself into the New Jersey system than an older established one? These questions are directed of course towards the reference collection of an Area Library. The larger issues of the cost of the collection, the cost of reference service to the public, the relationship of the cost of the reference function to other responsibilities outlined for the Area Libraries, are outside the scope of this study. However, they are inescapable

questions and lead to the two factors which were noted at the beginning of this report.

CHECKLIST

I. REFERENCE MATERIALS: FINDINGS

If the objections to a date distribution method of evaluation of a reference collection present minor problems, the problem of the subjectivity involved in the selection of titles for a "new form of library facility" is critical. Certainly any such list is far from amenable to objective study. Compilers of lists are quick to point out that their lists are to be used as guides or that such lists contain "representative" titles.

In comparing the holdings of the two New Jersey Area Libraries against a list, all titles were considered--books, sets, serials. Because the New York list has a cut-off date of 1964 and the supplement is still in the printing stage, it was not used. The Pennsylvania list, however, is supplemented through 1967. The geographic proximity, the involvement of some of the same librarians in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania were also factors in determining the use of this list for checking purposes.

The following table indicates the relationship of books to sets and serials in the various collections.

Table 6

	Total titles	Books	Sets and Serials
(New York List	1,012	840	172)
Pennsylvania List	1,356	1,044	312
Woodbridge P.L.	2,293	1,984	309
Plainfield P.L.	4,858	3,589	1,269

Considering the difference in the size of collections, it is difficult to make any strong statement regarding the incidence of titles appearing in the three collections (excluding the New York list). It must be noted that the collections were checked title by title; similar works were not accepted as substitutes.

The question of the adequacy of an earlier edition comes up here. More complex than simply newer vs. older edition is the question of types of reference works. For example, is one French-English dictionary equal to another French-English dictionary? Should an Area Library have a French dictionary as well as a French-English dictionary?

Of the total collection on the Pennsylvania list,
Plainfield owned 741 titles or 54.65% and,
Woodbridge owned 758 titles or 55.90%.

There was an incidence of 537 titles or 39.60% common to all three lists.

In addition to checking titles, editions of titles were also noted.

	Same title as Pennsylvania list but an older edition,	but a newer edition.
Plainfield P.L.	8.91%	3.64%
Woodbridge P.L.	7.26%	6.33%

It is interesting to note that the Woodbridge collectiom contains a greater number of titles on the Pennsylvania list than the Plainfield collection and that it has fewer older editions and more newer editions of those titles than the Plainfield collection. Here again, the newness of the Woodbridge collection is apparently the strongest factor involved. The fact that for collections with the same cut-off date, Woodbridge Public Library has 6.33% newer editions than the Pennsylvania list raises the question of weeding titles on lists and replacing older

editions with newer ones.

Inconclusive as these findings are, they do point to the issue of which titles should be in each Area Library in order to provide equality of opportunity to information for the whole State.

II. ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING SERVICES: FINDINGS

In contrast to evaluating an entire collection, determining desirable titles in areas such as abstracting and indexing services is a more feasible task. The question of subjectivity of selection arises but not to the degree as in general collections. One way to make such a list would be to include the commonly accepted general indexes and the best or most comprehensive subject indexes available. In this study a list was made using the 50 titles from the Second Report No. 2 and adding 14 titles of comparable generality and quality.

The list and the holdings of the two Area Libraries follow.

Table 7

This list is based on the checklist in Second Report No. 2. The 14 additional titles are indicated by asterisks.

Title	Date of Vol. 1.	Vols. to date	Woodbridge Date	Woodbridge Vols.	Plainfield Date	Plainfield Vols.
American Book Publishing Record	1960	9	1965-	4	1960-	9
Applied Science & Technology Index	1958	11	1958-	11	1958-	11
Art Index	1933	36	1947-	22		0
Bibliographic Index	1938	31	1963-	6		0
Biography Index	1947	22	1961-	8		0
Biological Abstracts	1926	43	1965-	4		0
*Biological and Agricultural Index	1964	5	1965-	4		0
*Bioresearch Index	1965	4	1967-	2		0
Book Review Digest	1905	64	1905-	64	1905-	64
*Book Review Index	1965	4	1966-	3	1965-	4
Books in Print	latest	1	latest	1	latest	1
British National Bibliography	1950	19	1965-	4		0
*Business Literature	1928	41	1964-	5		0
Business Periodicals Index	1958	11	1958-	11	1958-	11
*Business Service Checklist	1946	23	1965-	4		0
Catholic Periodical Index	1930	39		0		0
*Checklist of Official New Jersey Publications	1965	4	1965-	4		0
Chemical Abstracts	1907	62		0	1921-64	44
Choice	1964	5	1964-	5	1964-	5
Cumulative Book Index	1928	41	1928-	41	1928-	41
Dissertation Abstracts	1952	17		0		0
Education Abstracts	1949-65	17		0		0
Education Index	1929	40	1961-	8	1963-	6
Employment Relations Abstracts	1958	11		0		0
Engineering Index	1892	77	1963,65-	5	1892	77
Essay and General Literature Index	1934	35	1934-	35	1934-	35
Fichero Bibliografico Hispano-Americano	1961	8		0		0
*Forthcoming Books and Subject Guide	latest	1	latest	1	latest	1
Funk & Scott Index of Corporations and Industries	1960	9		0		0
Historical Abstracts	1955	14	1967-	2		0

Title	Date of Vol. 1	Vols. to date	Woodbridge Date	Woodbridge Vols.	Plainfield Date	Plainfield Vols.
Index Medicus	1879	90	1965-	4		0
Index to Book Reviews in the Humanities	1960	9		0	1961-	8
Index to Legal Periodicals	1909	60	1961-	8		0
Industrial Arts Index	1913-57	45	1928-31, 1944-57	18	1913-57	45
International Index	1918-64	47	1952-64	13	1918-64	47
*Journal of Economic Abstracts	1963	6	1966-	3		0
Library Literature	1934	35	1936-	33	1934-	35
Library of Congress Catalogs	1946	23		0		0
Monthly Catalog of Government Publications	1895	71	1951-	18	1962-	7
Monthly Checklist of State Publications	1910	59	1965-	4	1963-	6
Music Index	1949	20	1964-	5		0
*New Jersey Legislative Index	latest	1	latest	1	latest	1
New Serial Titles	1961	8		0	1961-	8
New York Times Index	1851	118	1863-	106	1932-	37
Nineteenth Century Readers' Guide to Periodical Lit.(2v)	1944	2	1944	2	1944	2
*Nuclear Science Abstracts	1948	21	1966-	3		0
Paper Bound Books in Print	latest	1	latest	1	latest	1
Physics Abstracts	1898	71		0		0
Poole's Index to Periodical Literature (6v)	1881	6		0		0
*Population Index	1935	34	1965-	4		0
Psychological Abstracts	1927	42	1965-	4		0
Public Affairs Information Service	1915	54	1957-	12	1962-	7
*Publisher's Weekly	1872	97	1955-	14	1872-	97
*Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature	1905	64	1905-	64	1905-	64
Reference Catalog of Current Literature	latest	1	latest	1	latest	1
Review of Educational Research	1931	38		0		0
Subject Guide to B.I.P.	latest	1	latest	1	latest	1
Sociological Abstracts	1952	17	1965-	4		0
Technical Book Review Index	1917	52	1965-	4	1921	48
Textbooks in Print	latest	1		0		0
Union List of Serials	latest	1	latest	1	latest	1
*U.N. Documents Index	1950	17	1965-	4		0
Union List of Serials in N.J.	1958	11		0	1958-	11
Vertical File Index	1935	34	1965-	4	1955-	14
Total volumes		1860		590		750

Of the 64 titles, Woodbridge subscribes to 50 or 78.13%.

Of the 64 titles, Plainfield subscribes to 33 or 51.56%.

The volume totals have been calculated by assuming one volume per year for serial publications, the actual count for sets, and one volume each for those titles which libraries indicate as holding "latest volume or edition only." This total for all 64 titles is 1860 volumes.

Of the 1860 volumes, Woodbridge now has 590 or 31.72%.

Of the 1860 volumes, Plainfield now has 750 or 40.32%.

There should be no doubt that abstracting and indexing services are a primary responsibility in the reference function. Which of these services are most applicable for an Area Library is again a matter of definition and decision for the system.

The acquisition of many of these services on microfilm presents certain advantages: they are probably less often used than many reference books and the storage problem is considerably less for reels than large cumulated volumes. Completeness of runs of such titles, especially in a compact form, would seem to be a desirable aim for Area Libraries.

III. SERIALS: FINDINGS

The New Jersey plan suggests a minimum of 350 titles with cumulations of ten years for each title.

The problems of an ideal list, of selection and of equivalency of titles, arise here also. Several lists were considered. Finally, the selected list of 428 serial titles issued by the Newark Public Library was chosen as a base list because it seemed essential to have a standard

higher than would be expected from an Area Library. The list of 359 periodical titles compiled by M. L.-G. Denis for work done in the re-evaluation of the Pennsylvania system by Lowell Martin, was compared with the Newark list. From this shorter list prepared for the Pennsylvania district library centers, 120 titles which did not appear on the Newark list were added to it for checking purposes. Thus a list of 548 serial titles formed the basis of comparison for this study.

Of the 548 titles, Woodbridge subscribes to 327 or 59.67%.

Of the 548 titles, Plainfield subscribes to 183 or 33.39%.

Woodbridge has published a list of its serial holdings. It includes a total of 718 titles, 683 of which are currently received. The following is a table of holdings for this collection.

Table 8

Woodbridge Public Library Serial Holdings

No. of years held.	No. of titles	No. of titles currently received.
over 10 years	164 = 22.84%	160 = 23.43%
5 - 9 years	46 = 6.41%	42 = 6.15%
1 - 4 years	508 = 70.75%	481 = 70.42%
	718 100.00%	683 100.00%

Plainfield has a list of 341 titles currently received. Information of holdings and of serials not currently received is not yet available.

As an additional test, the holdings of the two libraries were compared with the Pennsylvania list alone. Excluding the titles of local Pennsylvania interest, 348 of the 359 titles remained.

Of the 348 titles, Woodbridge subscribes to 248 or 71.26%.

Of the 348 titles, Plainfield subscribes to 149 or 42.82%.

The approach to comparison, checking title-by-title, was used here. In the Pennsylvania study, the librarians were asked to list "equivalent" or "similar" titles if they subscribed to a title not on the list. For current interest and general reading this approach suffices. But abstracting and indexing services lead to specific serials. Certainly in future evaluation of the serial holdings of Area Libraries, the number and percentage of indexed and non-indexed titles will have to be a consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. General

Because the New Jersey plan is a new plan and an ambitious one, because there is time and opportunity for research and experimentation, three general recommendations are made. They extend beyond the immediate scope of this project, but assumptions, questions and difficulties arose which suggest that these recommendations are not presumptious.

It is recommended 1) that definite plans be made for research and experimentation for the New Jersey system, 2) that such research begin with basic definitions of the elements within that system, and 3) that future research be as cumulative in nature as possible rather than isolated and sporadic.

Although modifications to the earlier surveys were made in this project, the work here has remained within that framework. Whether such a method has more merit than beginning with a theoretical model and proceeding to investigate the practical aspects of that model should be the concern of the Library Development Committee.

II. Of the Pilot Project

A. It is recommended that each Area Library and each potential Area Library make a date distribution study of its reference books. This is largely a clerical task and not a time consuming one. (The tallying of the over 4,000 titles in Plainfield was done by three people in less than one working day.)

The emphasis on the modern needs of a modern urban state by the authors of Knowledge for All plus the surveys made by the Library Development Committee indicate that New Jersey citizens should have

up-to-date collections and that these collections be "weeded assiduously." Surely this admonition applies to the reference collection as well as to the collection as a whole. Evaluation of reference books by date distribution will then satisfy certain basic requirements of the plan.

B. As another beginning step, the holdings of abstracting and indexing services should be recorded and checked against the 64 titles used here. Again, this is a clerical task.

C. Union lists have been suggested as a solution to problems of communications within system. There is the somewhat abortive Union List of Serials of New Jersey and some consideration is being given to a union list of serials for Level III libraries. Although Area Libraries have been requested to list their serial holdings, it would seem excessive at this time to recommend a Union List of Serials of All Area Libraries. More concrete and practical recommendations for serials are made below.

III. Core Lists, Union Lists and Special Lists

The findings in this project indicate a wide diversity of holdings in area library reference collections. It would not be surprising to find date distributions of reference books in many older libraries heavily weighted with older materials. Since most Area Libraries have only recently become Level II libraries, and since their collections had been necessarily geared to the needs of Level I libraries, it would not be surprising to discover inadequacies in their holdings of serials and of abstracting and indexing services.

There appears to be considerable communication and rapport among the Library Development Committee, the State Library Agency and the Rutgers Library School. There is less evidence of a viable communication system between Level II and Level III libraries; the degree of communication between a Level II library and its Level I libraries is even less well known. Conversations with librarians at the three levels have suggested that there is something less than a clear understanding of the guidelines issued by the State Library in July, 1967, entitled LSCA Services, Responsibilities of Area Reference Libraries.

The recommendations in this section function within the present framework of the New Jersey system. They are meant to achieve maximum and immediate communication of holdings at minimum expense. The procedures involved have the value of practicality and are amenable to further work towards evaluation. They will not lead to vast and cumbersome systems of union lists which may or may not have future value. (One of the essential activities required in the documented noted above is to "develop cooperative lists of holdings, particularly serial holdings." Apparently this is leading to lists and supplements from

the Area Libraries although precisely what is included in the lists is not clearly defined. Twenty-two separate lists and supplements would lead, it would seem, to chaos rather than efficiency.) In short, the lists recommended here are a second step in the evaluation of reference materials for an Area Library, and a primary step in communication within the system.

A. For each of the three aspects of the reference function studied --reference books, abstracting and indexing services, and serials-- it is recommended that a Core List be prepared.

A Core List will consist of all the titles held in common by all Area Libraries. This list will represent what is equally available throughout the system. It should be distributed to all Level I libraries. This list will provide equal opportunity of access to a core of materials to all citizens of the state. It will insure common knowledge of basic resources to all librarians at both Level I and Level II and their publics throughout the state. It will, in the long run, provide considerable economy in locating basic reference information.

A Core List should not be confused with a recommended or a basic list of reference materials. Nor would it be a finding list since all the titles will be in all Level II libraries.

B. Public libraries have always enjoyed considerable autonomy in their operations. Furthermore, claims are made for areal or regional differences in information needs of citizens. Finally, libraries are urged to cooperate with each other for a variety of reasons, many of them financial.

In order to allow for individual differences among libraries and to encourage libraries to serve local needs with individually selected

collections, and still provide for knowledge of information for all, it is recommended that a Union List of Unique Titles of Area Libraries be compiled and distributed to both Level II and Level I libraries.

A unique title is defined as one which is not held in common by all Area Libraries.

This Union List of Unique Titles would insure that beyond the Core List the titles which exist within the system would be known, their location or locations known, and that both librarians and patrons would be able to select a direct path to the source of information.

C. These lists will provide a basis for evaluation and use. If these lists prove of sufficient value they should be maintained. If a unique title becomes common to all Area Libraries it would be incorporated in the Core List. The Union List of Unique Titles would be revised periodically to include only titles of works uniquely held.

A rough estimate would place the length of the Core List in the neighborhood of 1500 titles, and the length of the Union List at no more than 3,000 titles. In this scheme, as in the original plan, "assiduous weeding" of collections is necessary and desirable. This will be reflected in the lists.

D. If, for historical reasons, an Area Library has a strong local or special collection which adds particular strength to the system, such a local collection might be the occasion for a special publication as a contribution to the knowledge of information within the system as a whole.

IV. Reference Collections

A. Books

1. It is recommended that the Reference Collections of books in Area Libraries emphasize current materials of the caliber reported in the April 15 issues of Library Journal, of the Choice Opening Day Collection, and the July issues of College and Research Libraries.

The participation now of the Level III libraries should go far in supplying older, esoteric, and archival materials, and specialities which would burden the resources of the Area Libraries.

2. It is recommended that plans be made for the disposition of old and outdated reference titles. Any titles which have historical value might logically be deposited in the State Library.

3. It is recommended that a list of at least 1,000 reference books be made which are considered basic for New Jersey Area Libraries. This list would offer a basis of comparison to the Core List.

In addition, specific subjects should be noted in which similar titles could serve the same reference function, e.g., in the areas of dictionaries and encyclopedias.

B. Abstracting and Indexing Services

It is recommended that runs of abstracting and indexing services be as complete as possible. If all the units in the system owned the same services, 1) bibliographic citation and subject searching would be facilitated at every level within the system; 2) inter-library loans would be facilitated; and 3) location of materials for photocopying would be made more efficiently.

C. Serials

An unindexed serial publication or periodical has limited value

for reference service. Serials which are indexed should be kept for at least ten years to accept an arbitrary figure. Date distribution of the use of periodicals similar to the work done by Blasingame in the inter-library loan study in Pennsylvania could readily determine the length of runs of individual titles or of titles in subject areas needed in a Level II library. Provision for storage of older runs and unindexed serials should be made in the State Library and the Level III libraries.

The number of serials held by Area Libraries as compared with the number of serials indexed in the available tools will depend upon the future definition of the functions of the Area Libraries. Considering the number of serials and the number of indexed serials, the term "Backstop" simply is not clear enough.

CONCLUSION

It should be clear by this point that what appears to be of primary importance to the New Jersey plan in evaluating the reference collections of Area Libraries is 1) definitions, 2) the beginning of meaningful and instructive communication among the three levels of libraries, and 3) the initial production of a Core List, followed by a Union List of Unique Titles, and eventually a Recommended List of Reference Titles tailored to the needs of New Jersey.

There appears to be no particular benefit in publishing a single union list with endless repetition of holdings or the publishing of 22 separate lists of holdings which are bound to overlap each other considerably. Either plan would be more cumbersome than effective. On the other hand, a Core List will be a positive step in informing the public of what is available. The work done for this project proves that such information is easily obtained and at low cost.

These recommendations do not insure access to all information for all people. They do provide a positive and practical step forward, if the New Jersey system wishes to provide knowledge of information for all.

END

7.31.69